IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (currently amended) A method for echo reduction, comprising:

setting a predetermined time period having an expiration;

~~detecting~~ initializing a timer to operate for said predetermined time period at a start of a transmission of communication signals; and

attenuating communication signals at the start of said transmission until said expiration of said predetermined time period to reduce amplitudes of echo signals prior to echo cancellation.

2. (cancelled)

3. (cancelled)

4. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving one or more signals from one or more echo cancellers indicating that echo signals are cancelled below a threshold; and

continuing attenuating the communication signals from the start of the communication to substantially when the signals from the echo cancellers are received.

5. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving one or more echo canceller signals from one or more echo cancellers; and

adjusting an attenuation value based on the echo canceller signals to attenuate the communication signals.

6. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

providing for one or more attenuation values; and

attenuating the communication signals based on the attenuation values.

7. (original) The method of claim 6, further comprising:

setting the attenuation values based on an estimated effectiveness of the echo cancellers from the start of the communication.

8. (original) A method for echo reduction, comprising:

detecting a start of a communication; and

attenuating communication signals of the communication to reduce amplitudes of echo signals during a predetermined time period prior to echo cancellation.

9. (currently amended) A method for echo reduction, comprising:

detecting a start of a communication;

receiving one or more signals from one or more echo cancellers indicating that echo signals are cancelled below a threshold; and

attenuating communication signals of the communication <u>for a predetermined time</u> to reduce amplitudes of echo signals based on the signals received from the echo cancellers prior to echo cancellation.